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## **BAUCUS AND CAMP TEAM UP TO LAUNCH TAXREFORM.GOV**

*Chairmen Launch Web Site to Provide American People Opportunity to Weigh In On Tax Reform*

**WASHINGTON** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and House Ways and Means Chairman Dave Camp (R-Mich.) today teamed up to launch [TaxReform.gov](http://TaxReform.gov), a new website dedicated to obtaining input from the American public on tax reform.

**“America’s tax code today is complex, inefficient and acting as a brake on our economy. Chairman Camp and I believe it is in need of a serious overhaul. Over the past two years we’ve held more than 50 hearings and heard from hundreds of experts on how to fix the tax code, to make it simpler and fairer for families and spark a more prosperous economy. Now it’s time to hear from the most important stakeholders — the American people,”** Chairman Baucus said. **“Through the web site TaxReform.gov and Twitter all Americans will be able to weigh in and participate directly in the debate. We want to know what people think the nation’s tax system should look like and how we can make families lives easier.”**

**“The tax code is littered with special interest provisions that Washington has put in over the last 27 years. It is time to go line-by-line through the tax code and clean it up. There is no reason Americans should have to spend over 6 billion hours and over \$160 billion every year just trying to comply with the tax code. Chairman Baucus and I believe in a tax code that is more effective and efficient. A simpler, fairer tax code will help families and it will help strengthen our economy. But Washington doesn’t have all the answers. That is why we are joining together in a non-partisan way to invite you to weigh in on this debate. We want you, the American people, to share your story and your ideas about how our tax code should work,”** Chairman Camp said.

Developed in partnership with the Joint Committee on Taxation, TaxReform.gov will serve as a platform for the American public to weigh in on tax reform. Input from visitors to the web site will be valuable to the Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means Committee as they craft legislation. The site also incorporates many Twitter tools that allow the public to weigh in by following @simplertaxes.

The idea is based on efforts of former Ways and Means Chair Dan Rostenkowski to engage the American public in the last successful overhaul of the U.S. tax code in 1985. He encouraged the American public to send letters in support of tax reform in what became known as the “Write Rosty Campaign.” As a result, Rostenkowski received more than 75,000 letters and post cards from the American public in support of tax reform, helping lead to the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

Chairmen Baucus and Camp have recreated the outreach effort with a 21<sup>st</sup> century twist. Visitors to the web site can learn about tax reform and submit ideas on how to improve the tax code. The site has been built around three sections: Why reform the Tax Code? What's already underway? Share your story and ideas

The site also provides a library of material detailing the efforts by Chairmen Baucus and Camp over the past two years as they have developed comprehensive tax reform proposals.

### **Background on the "Write Rosty Campaign"**

In early 1985, at the start of the last successful overhaul of the nation's tax code, a little-known House committee chairman named Dan Rostenkowski delivered the Democratic response to President Reagan's national address on tax reform. Rostenkowski used his speech, which drew immediate praise, as an opportunity to launch his "Write Rosty" campaign, calling on Americans to send his Capitol Hill office letters of support for a tax reform plan that would make the system simpler and fairer.

Within days, Rostenkowski had received more than 75,000 letters, as well as several more eclectic items, including a tax reform t-shirt and a two-by-four to "beat back lobbyists". Rostenkowski noted at the time how important it was for him and the Democratic Party to engage a naturally-skeptical public on tax reform to demonstrate what it was about – simplicity and fairness. He said average Americans felt like "suckers and chumps" when they paid their taxes because the system was rigged to give special privileges to the lucky few who could hide money in tax shelters and dodge paying their fair shares.

### **"Write Rosty" with a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Twist**

There is a compelling story to be told about how Chairmen Baucus and Camp are working together to revive public engagement on tax reform. They are developing bills to make the tax code simpler and fairer, and they want everyday Americans to be active participants in the reform process.

The public, just like in 1985, is naturally skeptical of tax reform. That's partly because the issues are so complex, but it's also because Democrats and Republicans in Congress have struggled to find common ground on much of anything lately. But tax reform has backers in both parties, and Chairmen Baucus and Camp have one of the most productive bipartisan relationships in Congress. They see this as an opportunity to legislate in the light of day and keep partisan politics from derailing the process. And the kind of engagement the "Write Rosty" campaign sparked nearly 30 years ago, is even easier today thanks to the Internet and social media. That's why the chairmen are launching TaxReform.gov and @simplertaxes, to get the public involved and active in the process.

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